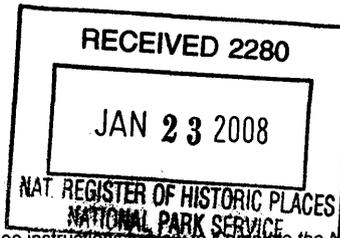


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



133

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bergstein, Moritz, Shoddy Mill and Warehouse
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 6046 Stagecoach Trail N. not for publication N/A
city or town Oak Park Heights vicinity
state Minnesota code MN county Washington code 163 zip code 55082

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Britta L. Bloomberg 1/16/08
Signature of certifying official Britta L. Bloomberg Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 3.5.08

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structure
		objects
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:

manufacturing facility and industrial storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/trade

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete, stone

walls wood, stone

roof metal, composition

other brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Industry

Period of Significance

ca. 1890-1910

Significant Dates

ca. 1890

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

Name of property

Washington County, MN

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Description

The Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse (ca.1890) are located on a wooded site on the east side of Stagecoach Trail in Oak Park Heights. The warehouse occupies a portion of Lot 4 of Block 2 of Elfelt's Addition to Oak Park and the shoddy mill occupies a portion of Lot 3. Trunk Highway (TH) 95 runs along the east edge of the property, opposite a steep embankment. The surrounding streets have been cleared of all buildings, including the Bergstein house and barn and other outbuildings.

The Moritz Bergstein property historically included a house, barn, and other outbuildings on the west side of the street and the warehouse and shoddy mill on the east side. Only the warehouse and shoddy mill remain.

Shoddy Mill

The one-story shoddy mill has a rectangular plan measuring approximately 27 by 21 feet. The walls are mortared rubble and dressed stone and rest on a rubblestone foundation. The corners are strengthened with randomly spaced limestone quoins. The shed roof is clad in composition shingles and is supported on a wood beam and steel purlins. The level floor is dirt.

A large, non-original overhead door and a single door are located on the north elevation. The overhead door appears to have been installed over an original, smaller opening capped with a red brick, segmental arch. On the west facade there is another segmental-arched brick entry. An original entry opening on the east wall has been infilled and a smaller opening cut above it; two red brick headers form a segmental arch above the opening. There is no evidence of the former dust house that was attached to the east elevation. There are no openings on the south elevation.

The mill interior is an undivided space with exposed rubblestone walls. Steel purlins and a single wood beam support the plywood ceiling. There is no machinery or equipment relating to the building's use as a shoddy mill.

The shoddy mill retains a good level of historic integrity, with the original stone construction and workmanship evident on most of the building. The enlargement or blocking of original openings and the introduction of new openings has not significantly altered its design or appearance. Integrity of location is excellent. Although there is evidence of the historic rail alignment that connected to Bergstein's railroad spur, much of the surrounding historic Oak Park residential and industrial context has been removed. Therefore, the property retains only a fair level of integrity of setting, feeling and association.

Warehouse

The two-story, wood-framed warehouse has a rectangular plan measuring approximately 29 by 31 feet.

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Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

Name of property

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The gable roof is clad in metal. The wood stud bearing walls rest on a stone foundation and are sheathed in wood and covered with wide wood siding, except for the east elevation where historic drop siding remains. The second-floor joists are supported on a central wood beam; one end of the beam acts as a truss with the addition of an inverted kingpost and iron tension rod. It is not known if this is an original feature.

There are no openings on the north elevation. On the ground level of the south elevation there is an overhead door, one single door, and one double-hung window. These appear to be modern openings. There are four second-story windows in this elevation and each contains one-over-one aluminum sash.

On the ground level of the west elevation there is a central wood sliding door flanked by windows that contain one-over-one aluminum sash. Three windows that contain one-over-one aluminum sash are placed at the second story. A circular medallion in the west gable end that appears in a ca. 1950s photograph appears to remain on the present building and bears the current business name. A sliding wood door is centered on the east elevation. A single window containing one-over-one aluminum sash is placed to the north of the door.

At the first floor interior, wide wood planks brace the walls with and distinctive "V" and "W" shapes. The original first floor layout has been modified with an office, restroom, and stair that occupy the southeast corner. There is no evidence of the original stair. Near the east wall there is a rope lift and trap door that provide access to the second floor. The concrete slab floor is a replacement of the original wide plank wood flooring.

The unpartitioned, unfinished second floor was used for mattress manufacture. An elevated wood catwalk extends from the trap door near the east wall to a large, eight-spoke wood pulley and rope. The intact pulley was used to lift mattresses and raw materials. Two wood racks with wide slats, apparently used for stuffing mattresses, are intact. Previously, there was a separate workroom on the west end of the space.

Like the shoddy mill, the warehouse retains a good level of exterior historic integrity. The enlargement or blocking of original openings and the introduction of new openings has not significantly altered its design or appearance. Integrity of location is excellent. Like the mill—although there is evidence of the historic rail alignment that connected to Bergstein's railroad spur—much of the surrounding historic Oak Park residential and industrial context has been removed. Therefore, the warehouse retains only a fair level of integrity of setting, feeling and association.

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Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

Name of property

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Section 8 Page 1

The Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse are eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Industry. The buildings have statewide significance and represent a rare example of the employment patterns of some Germanic Jewish immigrants in Minnesota in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The mill and warehouse are directly associated with the Bergstein family's adaptation to American economic life and illuminate aspects of the waste materials market, most notably the junk dealer's and rag picker's trades, and the manufacture of mattresses.

The period of significance is ca. 1890-1910, which marks the construction of the warehouse and shoddy mill and the operation of a waste materials business, shoddy mill, and mattress factory on the property.

Property History

Beginning about 1890, Moritz Bergstein and his wife Bertha Gardner Bergstein built a house, barn, shoddy mill, and a rag and mattress warehouse on present-day Stagecoach Road, then S. Main Street, in Oak Park. Moritz also operated a junkyard on the property. Oak Park (now Oak Park Heights) was a small settlement at the southern edge of Stillwater served by rail and the electric streetcar that ran between Stillwater and South Stillwater. It remained a successful location for sawmills and other industries throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹

Moritz Bergstein (1852-1923) was a native of Hungary and arrived in the United States in 1879. When he reached Philadelphia in May 1879, via Liverpool, he listed his occupation as a laborer.² Bertha Gardner Bergstein (1861-1925) was a native of Bohemia and arrived in the United States in 1883.³ Her place of residence until her marriage in 1890 is unknown.

Moritz may have been in New York City in 1880, where he worked as a porter.⁴ In 1884-5 Moritz was in Minnesota, where he operated a restaurant at 309 N. Main Street in Stillwater. His brother, Ignatz (1867-1945), who arrived in the United States in 1883, was also employed at the restaurant.⁵ Stillwater was then a leading lumber producing center with a population that would peak at 12,318 in 1890.⁶ By 1887, Moritz and Ignatz were employed as peddlers and resided at the Lakeside Hotel in Stillwater. Ignatz moved to Minneapolis by 1889, where he listed his employment as "rags."⁷

¹ Carole Zellie, *Washington County Historic Contexts*. Prepared for Washington County Land Management, 1999, 22-23.

² *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1800-1882*. Micropublication M425-97. Line 1. RG036, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³ 1900 U.S. Census, Stillwater Township, Washington Co., E.D. 49, Sheet 4 provides these dates.

⁴ 1880 U.S. Census, New York City, New York County, E.D. 74, Sheet 8.

⁵ 1920 U.S. Census, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, E.D. 43, Sheet 27A.

⁶ Zellie, *Washington County Historic Contexts*, 102.

⁷ Barbara Beving Long, *The Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House, Shoddy Mill & Waste Materials Yard, Phase III Historical Documentation Study, St. Croix River Crossing Project*. (Prepared for Mn/DOT, St. Paul, May 1997), 27.

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Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

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Moritz Bergstein and Bertha Gardner married in 1890 and first resided at 617 W. Maple Street in Stillwater.⁸ Their daughter Leah (ca. 1900-1986) was adopted in 1903.

The Bergstein property included four lots of Block 7 and four lots of Block 2 of Elfelt's Addition to Oak Park.⁹ The site was adjacent to good transportation, including a railroad siding on the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railway (CSPM&O). Although nearby TH 36 (formerly TH 45) was not paved until the 1920s, it provided a link to St. Paul and other routes.

The surrounding area was sparsely built up with unpretentious houses and most of the Bergstein's neighbors were sawmill or lumberyard employees at one of the businesses along the nearby riverbank. The CSPM&O rail line crossed the street separating the Bergstein's lots and a wood railroad viaduct further divided it.

In the early 1890s the Bergsteins built a house on the west side of the street and a warehouse and mill on the east side. At various locations on the property, Moritz Bergstein apparently collected, sorted, sold, and shipped a variety of waste materials including scrap metal. The Bergsteins also raised chickens, a cow, and horses.¹⁰

By 1894 Moritz was still employed as a junk dealer but had also begun operation of the shoddy mill and was listed as a mattress manufacturer in the Stillwater City Directory.¹¹ He was in business with brother Ignatz in Minneapolis as the Bergstein Brothers.¹² During the next 23 years, the Oak Park property was a base for Moritz Bergstein's junk business and mattress manufacture. He was also involved in small-scale money lending and banking. At the time of his death he had considerable investments as well as 500 tons of old iron and junk valued at \$3,000. His obituary noted that he was known as the "junk man" and that "he was always honest and straightforward in his dealings . . . he was held in high esteem by the businessmen of Stillwater and vicinity and his death will be regretted."¹³ Bertha Bergstein died in 1925.

After Bertha's death, Leah Bergstein Cohn inherited the property and occupied the house with her husband Jacob (1896-1978) and two children. Jacob still operated a junkyard on the property in 1930 and was also a machinist.¹⁴ In 1944 they sold the property to Jacob Koller, who operated the Koller Coal

⁸ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, Timeline, 1.

⁹ Bertha Bergstein Probate Inventory and Appraisal, November 9, 1925 in Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, Appendix. The Bergsteins also owned additional adjacent property.

¹⁰ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 45.

¹¹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 29.

¹² Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 29.

¹³ "Moritz Bergstein Dead," *Stillwater Gazette*, 4 Sept. 1923.

¹⁴ *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 33; 1930 U.S. Census, Stillwater Township, Washington Co., E.D. 82-31, Sheet 4B

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Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

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Yard and the Oak Park Fuel business.¹⁵ Koller stored tons of coal in the first floor of the warehouse. His son, Robert Koller, operated an automotive repair business on the site.

Site Layout

The Bergstein's built their now-razed house, privy, shed, and barn on the west side of the street. The simple gable-roofed, clapboard-sided house featured a long porch surmounted by three upper story windows facing the street. A one-story, shed-roofed kitchen and well room were attached to the south wall. Evidence in the house such as trim and certain materials suggest that it may have developed from a two-room structure, possibly moved to the site, or that it was pieced together using recycled materials. The additive plan and the kitchen and well room may have reflected Bohemian building practices.¹⁶ A gable- and shed-roofed barn was situated south of the house, along with a wood outbuilding, a metal outbuilding, and a privy.

The shoddy mill was built on the east side of the street. The shed-roofed, rubblestone-walled building housed equipment for grinding wool rags into a fiber known as shoddy. A steam engine powered the spiked mill, or devil. It had an attached engine room with a 25-foot-high iron chimney at the rear. An iron conveyor connected the mill to a one-story dust house that measured about 12 by 15 feet. Water for the steam engine was drawn from a well beneath the engine house. An iron-clad water tank was located next to the engine room.¹⁷

The gable-roofed, wood frame mattress and rag warehouse was placed close to the rail siding approximately 22 feet from the mill. The undivided first level had sliding doors at each end and was braced with wide planks above a thick wood floor that provided a sorting and storage area. The second floor had a workroom served by a trap door and wood pulley. Mattress stuffing material was raised by a wooden pulley on a catwalk, and dumped into the workroom by a canvas chute. Wood racks with wide slats were used for holding the mattresses during stuffing.¹⁸

Significance

The shoddy mill and warehouse are associated with late 19th-century Jewish immigration to Minnesota and the waste materials trade and mattress manufacture. The Bergsteins were one of only a few Jewish families in the Stillwater area, but through their business and family associations they were part of a larger network that extended from Hungary and Bohemia to Minneapolis, St. Paul, and beyond. Their immigration stories reflect the pattern of late 19th-century Germanic-Jewish immigration in Minnesota, including chain migration, traditional Jewish occupations, and acculturation.

¹⁵ *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 33.

¹⁶ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 35-36.

¹⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Stillwater, May 1904, Sheet 22.

¹⁸ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 30.

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The family's buildings, like their way of living, were an amalgam of American and European traditions and represent the economic activity of a Jewish immigrant family. Bergstein progressed from an itinerant rag peddler who worked from rented quarters to an established scrap dealer with a permanent location. The buildings mark this effort as well as Bergstein's success with a shoddy mill and mattress manufacturing business.¹⁹

Jewish Immigration in Minnesota

The Bergsteins were part of a complex migration that blurred national boundaries. Many Jewish immigrants who reached Minnesota during the 1880s were from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and were part of a surge of settlement that included Russian refugees fleeing persecution.²⁰

While Moritz Bergstein identified himself as a native of Hungary in the 1895 Minnesota census, in the 1900 federal census both he and Bertha were identified as Austrian. In the 1910 federal census he was identified as "Hun. German" and Bertha was "Austr. Bohemia."²¹ Moritz's brother, Ignatz, was identified as Russian in 1910, while Bertha's brother called himself Czechslovakian in 1930.²²

Such Germanic Jews arriving in America in the late 19th century came from a region of intense political upheaval, with shifting political boundaries, alliances, and regional names. Hungary encompassed a very large territory before World War I, including portions of what was later known as Yugoslavia, Romania, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Czechoslovakia as well as a narrow segment of Austria.²³ Bohemia and Hungary both became "Germanized" under the influence of German rulers. However, the German-speaking Bergsteins also responded to Jewish, Bohemian, Hungarian, and other influences.

Little is known about the circumstances of Moritz Bergstein's arrival in the United States in 1879. In 1883 his brother, Ignatz, followed him.²⁴ Bertha Bergstein's decision to leave her homeland, however, was clearly part of the pattern of chain migration, where one or several members of a community paved the way for other friends and relatives.

¹⁹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 29.

²⁰ Hyman Berman, "The Jews," in *They Chose Minnesota*, June D. Holmquist, ed. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981), 489; 492.

²¹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 8.

²² For Ignatz Bergstein, see 1910 U.S. Census, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co., E.D. 62, Sheet 6A. This appears to be Ignatz, who is recorded as Issac as a Plymouth Avenue mattress maker. For Ignatz Gardner, see 1920 U.S. Census, Quincy City, Gadsen County, Florida, E.D. 20-2, Sheet 8B.

²³ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 7.

²⁴ 1900 U.S. Census, Stillwater Township, Washington Co., E.D. 49, Sheet 4. Long, however, suggests 1880 for his date of arrival.

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Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

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Bertha apparently left Bohemia for Minnesota in 1883.²⁵ Her brother, also named Ignatz, followed in 1884.²⁶ At least two of their four sisters would eventually join them. Bertha and Ignatz Gardner had relatives in Minneapolis, most notably Joseph Robitshek (1846-1922), regarded as one of the city's pioneer Jewish merchants.²⁷ Robitshek was born in Bohemia and immigrated to Hartford, Connecticut in 1867 and to St. Paul in the following year. By 1900, his menswear manufacturing firm, Robitshek, Frank and Heller, was one of the largest Jewish businesses in Minneapolis. Another family connection extended from Bohemia to Minneapolis through Issac Weil, a liquor dealer. This connection possibly led to the introduction of Bertha Gardner and Moritz Bergstein. In 1889-91 Ignatz Gardner, Bertha's brother, worked for Weil as a clerk and bartender.²⁸ Moritz's brother, Ignatz Bergstein, also worked for Weil as a bookkeeper in 1895-97.²⁹

Historian Hyman Berman notes that there was an established Jewish middle-class in Minneapolis by the 1880s. Its members were often at "arms-length" from the newer arrivals, and each ethnic group had separate neighborhoods organized around businesses and synagogues.³⁰ Little is known of the Bergstein's organized religious life. Bertha's funeral service was officiated by Rabbi Samuel N. Dienard of Temple Israel in Minneapolis, a Reform congregation. Moritz and Bertha were buried in Montefiore Cemetery, Minneapolis.

Jewish Occupations

Moritz Bergstein engaged in occupations in Minnesota that were typical of many Germanic Jewish immigrants. In both their homeland and in America, Jews were involved in many types of retail and wholesale trade. Clothing, textile, and household goods manufacture were important in both Europe and America, and self-employment was traditional.

Jewish businessmen often settled in larger cities such as Minneapolis and St. Paul but they also operated small stores in many smaller Minnesota communities. Levy & Daniels, for example, opened a store in Stillwater in the late 1850s, and advertised the "largest and best assorted stock of dry goods in the St. Croix Valley."³¹ The prosperous firm observed Jewish holy time, and did not transact business from sundown Friday until Saturday evening.³² While such merchants were physically isolated from Jewish

²⁵ 1900 U.S. Census, Stillwater Township, Washington Co., E.D. 49, Sheet 4. Long suggests 1880.

²⁶ 1920 U.S. Census, Quincy City, Gadsen County, Florida, E.D. 52, Sheet 7B. By 1907, Ignatz Gardner (1871-1943) married and moved to Florida where he became the president of a tobacco factory. Some of his descendants still live in Quincy.

²⁷ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 24.

²⁸ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 24.

²⁹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 25.

³⁰ Berman, "The Jews," 493.

³¹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 9.

³² Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 9.

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communities in larger cities, they might have maintained their ties with synagogues in St. Paul or Minneapolis.

Peddlers and Waste Materials Dealers

The significance of the shoddy mill and warehouse is rooted in the traditional Jewish occupation of peddling and dealing in a variety of waste materials. Immigrants like Moritz Bergstein began with itinerant peddling and used the occupation as a base for expanding their economic pursuits in America. Peddling, defined as engaging in business in an itinerant manner, was roughly divided into retail peddling and junk peddling. While the former often resulted in retailing at a fixed location, the other led to dealing in second hand items, junk or other waste materials, at a fixed location: "peddlers likely engaged in whatever blend of retail and junk peddling suited the circumstances."³³ Cast-off goods were especially in demand in remote locations where goods were in short supply.

Retail peddling had an associated class hierarchy, with homeless peddlers at one end and jewelry peddlers and those with fixed locations at the other.³⁴ Many Jewish peddlers in Minnesota used peddling or junk dealing as a rung on the ladder of success, and eventually moved into retail sales at a fixed location. Hyman Berman observes that "Peddling became widespread throughout the state, and many a hawker settled down as a retail merchant in one of the smaller market towns."³⁵ In addition to Moritz Bergstein, at least seven other peddlers worked in Stillwater between ca. 1880 and 1910. In 1880, 42-year old L. Cohen, a native of Baden (Germany), supported his eight children as a dry goods peddler.³⁶ Others included Issac Bernstein, a native of Austria, who began working as a peddler and second hand dealer in Stillwater in 1884, soon after arriving in the United States.³⁷ His son David continued the trade. Edward Cuffell, Barnet Steinman, Karl Steinman, and Issac Gordon were others listed in city directories.³⁸ These individuals and their families also likely comprised much of the Bergstein's local Jewish community.

Historians of the waste materials industry differentiate between the German Jews, who arrived with sufficient funds to operate from a fixed location, and the poorer Eastern European Jews who typically were itinerant. A survey of the 1914 *Minnesota Gazetteer* listed about 50 junk or second hand stores with possibly Jewish names in 37 communities in Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana.³⁹ For both groups, retail peddling lost its economic base in the 1920s with competition from

³³ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 10.

³⁴ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 11.

³⁵ Berman, "The Jews," 495.

³⁶ 1880 U.S. Census ED 44, Sheet 3.

³⁷ 1900 U.S. Census ED 33, Sheet 29.

³⁸ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 54.

³⁹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 10.

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Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

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low-cost department stores and shops as well as mail order businesses that drew away their low-income, worker clientele.⁴⁰

Waste Materials

Moritz Bergstein, however, specialized in the re-use of cast-off materials. Popular materials for collection, processing, and resale included rags, clothing, paper, bones, iron and other metals, rubber, wooden barrels, and bottles. The reprocessing of rags and textiles would be important for Bergstein, who converted them to a material known as shoddy and used them for stuffing mattresses. Other waste materials dealers converted bones into fertilizer, grease, and charcoal, or recycled bottles and glass into other products.

Because they collected, processed, and sold waste materials, enterprising Jewish-Americans were among those who provided a key link in the growing supply and demand chain of the growing U.S. population between 1880 and 1910. The population nearly doubled during this period and industry produced far more basic goods and the means to transport them than ever before.⁴¹ As Americans consumed more materials they were encouraged by inexpensive mass production; when large numbers reached a certain standard of living, they were able to afford to obtain and dispose of more items, and large-scale reuse of existing materials (waste) became possible.

Rag peddlers were found in most major midwestern cities in the late 19th century. Although there was a market for secondhand clothes, the collection of rags for a variety of industrial uses was an important business. American paper companies increasingly sought rags for their high quality paper, and by 1875 the United States imported more than 123 million pounds.⁴² Specialization among waste dealers was not precise, with most firms "ready to deal in whatever came along."⁴³

Historians of waste industries place the itinerant urban rag picker at the bottom of several classes of employment. The junk dealer, somewhat higher on the ladder, obtained a wide variety of waste or discarded materials and maintained a junkyard or store where materials were processed or stored. The waste materials dealer, however, traded in waste materials and especially metal with a scrap yard, while the broker was an intermediary between small dealers and consumers in junk and waste materials but maintained no yard.⁴⁴ The status of dealers and their products varied from place to place and depended on prices and profitability. In Chicago, for example, "small scale scrap iron dealers were at some point considered an economic cut above the rag dealer. But in 1905, the 'aristocrat of the waste material trade' was the dealer in woolen rags and scrap rubber, with the scrap metal dealer at the bottom of the pecking

⁴⁰ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 12.

⁴¹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 12.

⁴² Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 13.

⁴³ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 15.

⁴⁴ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 14.

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order.”⁴⁵ By the 1920s, approximately 200,000 persons were employed in some aspect of the scrap metal industry.⁴⁶ In small towns, dealers such as Moritz Bergstein handled all types of waste materials, including rubber, rags, papers, and non-ferrous metals. Specialties were developed as the scale of operations increased.

Small dealers sold directly to consumers, larger dealers, and brokers. Scrap was typically moved by rail or in some cases, barges. Bergstein’s junkyard location along a railroad spur offered a means for transporting scrap and participating in the larger network of the waste materials economy.

Shoddy Mills

The object of this manufacture is to produce cheap, useful, tasteful, and economical cloths for apparel, and other uses, and though all classes patronize them, they are especially adapted to meet the requirements and circumstances of the bulk of the people.

Samuel Jubb, *The History of the Shoddy-Trade: its Rise, Progress, and Present Position (1860)*⁴⁷

Bergstein’s specialty was the production of shoddy, a material made from recycled fabric, most typically wool. The ground wool could be carded and woven into new fabric, or used to make other products such as mattress stuffing. Wool ground into shoddy was also used as flocking for wallpaper. Shoddy production could occur in a large factory or in a small mill like Bergstein’s.⁴⁸

After sorting by unskilled workers, rags were torn up in a machine called a “devil.” The heavier particles fell to the bottom of the enclosed machine, and the lighter particles were transported by a blast of fan-driven air along a tube into a container outside the mill. Explosions could be caused when dust encountered a spark or other source of combustion.⁴⁹ Because the grinding process produced dust it attracted the attention of health reformers who described the respiratory disease called “shoddy fever.”⁵⁰

Shoddy came to have pejorative connotations of cheapness and inferior goods, since the remanufactured fabric was often of poor quality. During the Civil War, Jewish shoddy manufacturers were cast in

⁴⁵ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 15.

⁴⁶ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 17.

⁴⁷ Samuel Jubb, *The History of the Shoddy-Trade: its Rise, Progress, and Present Position* (London: 1860), 2.

⁴⁸ Batley, England, was a center for the early 19th-century development of shoddy and its subsequent large-scale factory production. In the United States, New England was a production center; Russian Jews were recruited to Springfield, Vermont in the 1890s to work in the Slack Shoddy Mill, the largest in New England. The workers were recruited by representatives of the mill as they arrived in New York. See “Immigration to Vermont 1840-1930,” accessed as 4/10/07 as http://www.flowofhistory.org/themes/movement_settlement/immigration.php; Peter Lee Glick, “The Woolen Industry of Pittsfield,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Maine at Orono, 1969), 26.

⁴⁹ John Thomas Arlidge, *The Hygiene, Diseases, and Mortality of Occupations* (London: Percival, 1892), 405.

⁵⁰ Arlidge, *Hygiene*, 407.

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stereotypical terms by journalists complaining about the poor quality of goods manufactured for the Union effort.⁵¹

An early 20th-century reference on textile manufacture noted that there was much misunderstanding about “shoddies.” One authority remarked that “there are few more unreasonable and foolish prejudices than that against shoddy, and so far from it being a term of reproach, it should really be one of praise; for the man who first brought shoddy into use has conferred an incalculable benefit on the world, and enabled millions of persons to be warmly and cheaply clothed . . . it would be unreasonable to despise paper-makers because they use up linen rags, or to despise dyers who use up colors made from coal tar, as to despise manufacturers who use up waste woollen rags as shoddy.”⁵²

Mattress Manufacture

Bergstein may have shipped the unspun and unwoven material on his rail siding to others for sale, or he may have used the shoddy to fill mattresses. However, one source reported that the filling might have been wood shavings.⁵³ Nearby Oak Park sawmills could have provided abundant wood scraps.

Bergstein is first identified as a mattress maker in 1894-95 Stillwater City Directory.⁵⁴ Typically, mattresses were bound into sewn cotton ticking and filled with various products such as cotton, wool, horsehair, or wood shavings, and then beaten out and flattened with a stick. The ticking was then closed and hand or machine tufted to hold its shape.⁵⁵ There may have been some public scrutiny of the process; sanitary bedding laws were passed around the turn of the century because organic materials were susceptible to attack by insects, bacteria, and mildew. In Minnesota there appears to have been state legislation on some aspects of bedding by 1913, including reference to the filling of mattresses with shoddy.⁵⁶

Moritz probably shipped his mattresses to Minneapolis where he and Ignatz operated their mattress company, Bergstein Brothers. The business was in operation from ca. 1900 to 1929.⁵⁷ The business address at 117 Plymouth Avenue N. was also Ignatz’s residence.⁵⁸ In 1900 Ignatz’s lodger, Louise

⁵¹ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 17.

⁵² *Cyclopedia of Textile Work: a General Reference Library on Cotton, Woollen and Worsted Yarn Manufacture, Weaving, Designing, Chemistry and Dyeing, Finishing, Knitting, and Allied Subjects*, volume II (Chicago: American School of Correspondence, 1907), 28.

⁵³ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 30.

⁵⁴ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 29.

⁵⁵ “History of the Bedding Business,” accessed as <http://www.strobel.com/historyBedBus.htm>, 4/10/07.

⁵⁶ See Minnesota Laws 325.25 and Laws 1913, c. 490 § 2.

⁵⁷ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 18.

⁵⁸ *Minneapolis City Directory* (1909), 245.

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Kutzhan, a native of Germany, was employed as a mattress maker. In Oak Park, Moritz Bergstein employed local women, some of them German immigrants.⁵⁹

Following a pattern established elsewhere in the Upper Midwest—and before national brands dominated the market—many area mattress companies had Jewish ownership, including Morris Fischbein's Northwestern Bedding, and Samuel Bronstein's United States Bedding Company, both in St. Paul. The bedding industry was robust when Bergstein and his brother were in business, but demand fell steeply during the Depression.⁶⁰

By 1910 the shoddy mill and possibly the mattress operation were no longer in operation. The Sanborn map then called the property a junkyard and noted that the dust house was used for paper storage. The map labeled the warehouse as a rag warehouse. By this time Moritz may have focused on re-selling scrap metal and other materials. He reported his employment to the 1910 census taker as a farmer.⁶¹ At the time of his death in 1923 he owned the means to obtain waste materials, including horses and three lumber wagons.⁶² Nevertheless, the Bergstein Brothers mattress company remained listed in the Minneapolis directory until 1929.

Money Lending

Moritz Bergstein, like other waste materials dealers, required cash on hand to pay for scrap purchases, and such dealers who "attained a high degree of prosperity would be in a position to provide loans to individuals as well as to invest in real estate and speculate in stocks."⁶³ In his later years he loaned small sums to various individuals and companies. The Bergsteins also held shares in companies such as Great Northern Railway and American Telephone and Telegraph, and invested in mortgage bonds for a number of real estate projects such as apartment construction. The estates left by the Bergsteins—totaling about \$85,000—as well as their considerable household goods illustrate the economic standing the household gained over a 30-year period and the degree of acculturation into middle-class American life they attained.⁶⁴

Summary

The Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse represent a small but important industry for some Germanic Jewish immigrants in Minnesota in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Aspects of the waste materials market, most notably the junk dealer's and rag picker's trades, and the manufacture of

⁵⁹ 1900 U.S. Census, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co., E.D. 26, Sheet 19; Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 30.

⁶⁰ "History of the Bedding Business." Accessed 4/10/07 as <http://www.strobel.com/historyBedBus.htm>.

⁶¹ 1910 U.S. Census, Stillwater Township, Washington Co., E.D. 188, Sheet 13A.

⁶² Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 31.

⁶³ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 19.

⁶⁴ Long, *Moritz and Bertha Bergstein House*, 31-34.

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mattresses were conducted in these buildings between ca. 1890 and 1910. During this period the Bergstein family gained a foothold in the Minnesota economy. The mill and warehouse retain a good level of historic integrity.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

Stillwater, Minne. - Wis.
1967, Revised 1993

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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	Zone	Easting	Northing
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Carole S. Zellie</u>		
organization	<u>Landscape Research LLC</u>	date	<u>4/16/07</u>
street and number	<u>1466 Hythe St.</u>	telephone	<u>651-641-1230</u>
city or town	<u>St. Paul</u>	state	<u>MN</u> zip code <u>55108</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<input type="text"/>		
street & number	<input type="text"/>	telephone	<input type="text"/>
city or town	<input type="text"/>	state	<input type="text"/> zip code <input type="text"/>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Moritz Bergstein Warehouse occupies Lot 3 of Block 2 Efelt's Addition to Oak Park. The Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill occupies Lot 4 of Block 2 Efelt's Addition to Oak Park.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the shoddy mill and warehouse.

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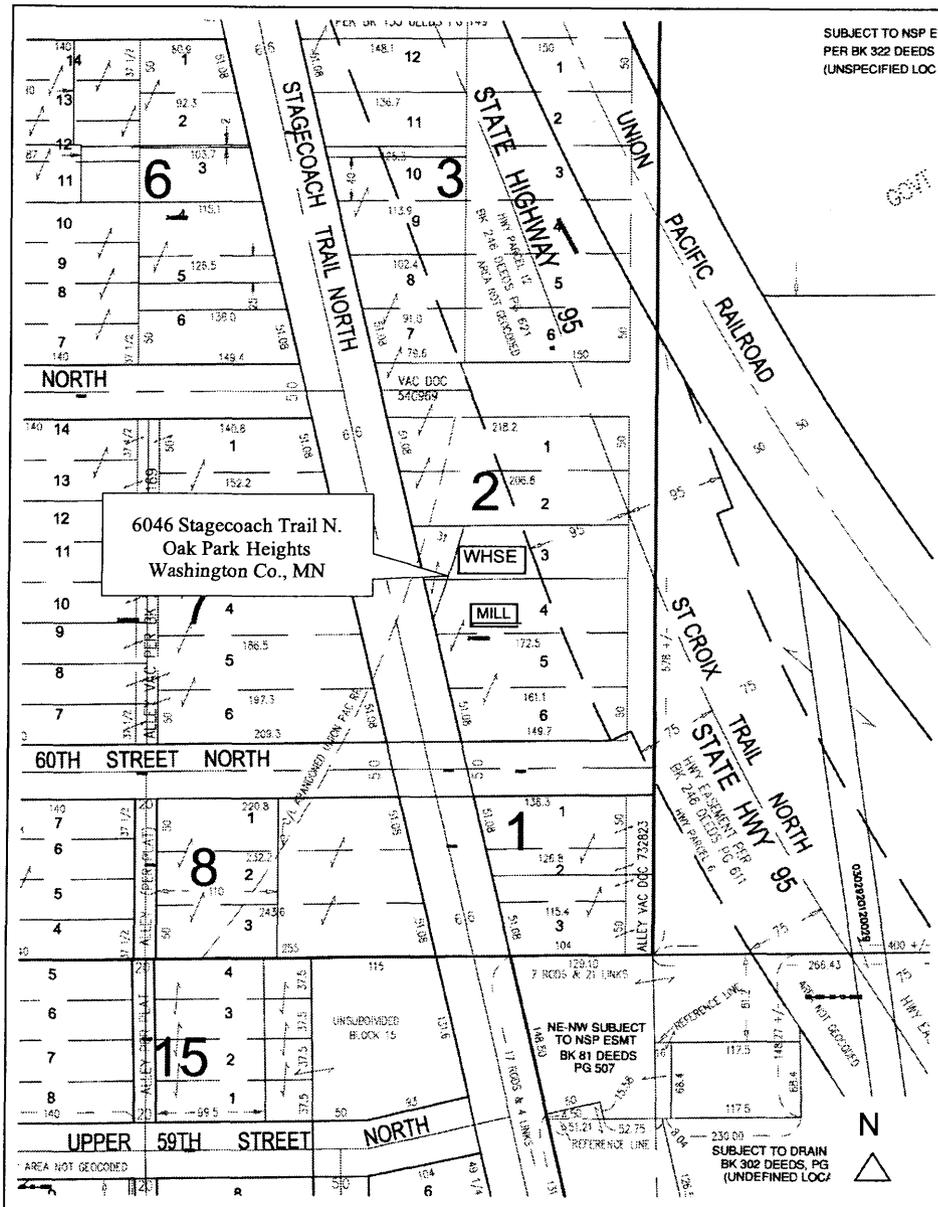
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Map 1. Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse, 6046 Stagecoach Trail, Oak Park Heights, MN (Source: Washington County Land Management, Stillwater, MN)

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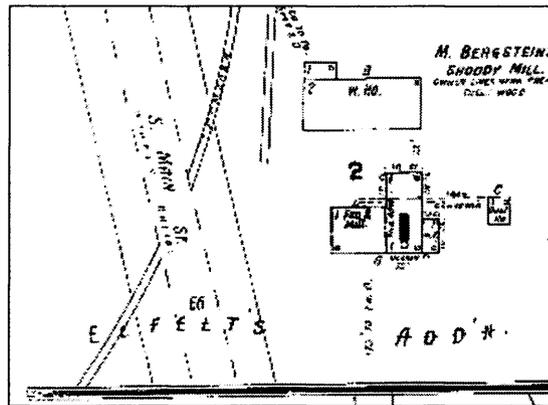
Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse

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Map 2.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, May 1904, Sheet 22.



Historic Photograph 1.
Warehouse, 6046 Stagecoach Trail, Oak Park Heights, MN
Date of photograph ca. 1950s (Mn/DOT)